

The Three Keys

To Profitable Online Advertising



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Introduction

Much has been written about “secrets” of marketing - the super strategies that the gurus supposedly know that create “silver bullet” marketing campaigns. The truth is, the very nature of marketing itself is more like the ancient practice of *Alchemy: a little art, a little science, a lot of persistence!*

The Art Of Marketing

To those who would say that marketing is all art and style and no substance, simply put, are wrong. Very wrong! This is a predominant attitude among many business owners, however, who assume that marketing is nothing more than a (perhaps necessary) expense.

The key is to always rate the *Art of Marketing* against the actual success of the campaign.

Superbowl ads are famous for their excess, but how many are financially successful? Remember all the dot com ads in 2000? Those guys spent **\$76,667 a second**, not counting their production costs! A year later, 14 of the 17 Internet companies were gone. Kaput. History. Always weigh the art and “the coolness” of your advertising against the hard, cold numbers of science.

There is indeed a great deal of art and instinct to advertising and marketing success. I’ll cover some here, but understand - style, technique and tips only go so far. There are tens of thousands of books, courses, classes, and online sites devoted to teaching clever marketing. In this Report we will weigh the art of marketing with its science, to try to find a balance that generates revenue. And this is, ultimately, the goal of all advertising and marketing.

The Science Of Marketing

Successful marketing requires science. Learning to understand your market(s) and tracking your results are the keys to increasingly successful campaigns. A professional marketer never rests and is never satisfied - he is always tweaking, always massaging, always testing, always seeking to improve results.

The key to the scientific side of marketing is to *always track your results!*

I’m often asked, “When are we done with testing? When can we ‘roll out’ the campaign?” On the surface this makes sense. My response is to forget the conception of testing as a preamble to a campaign. Think of it as an ongoing component of *every* campaign. Think of it more like “quality testing.” Manufacturers are constantly monitoring and testing for quality - and so should we.

We can create the greatest ad campaign of all time, one that everyone agrees is the best, most targeted program, with the catchiest slogan and the most descriptive graphics. If we simply run our campaign and don’t monitor our results, odds are that a month from now it will be trashed. Just didn’t pull. And it was done by an expert, by an agency, by the best of the best! Shows you what they know!

Creation of an ad campaign may seem to take a long time, but in reality, the creative efforts are only a preamble to the campaign itself. Developing the message and graphics, the website and brochures and ads, all amount to 10% or less of the effort of a true campaign.

No matter how good your ad, never run 100% of your campaign with it. Always reserve at least 10% -20% of your media using a different message. Then measure the results between the two.

This is the simplest approach to testing and tracking. When you have two ad messages or offers you think are equally good, run them 50-50 when you buy your media space. This is what is usually referred to as an A-B split.

Sometimes this approach, of always testing a different message or offer, is called a “champion vs. challenger” technique, where the “champion” is your current (or “control”) ad, while the “challenger” is the test ad.

Consistency & Persistence

Consistency, coupled with persistence, make up the third quality of successful advertising. Like Winston Churchill famously said when giving a commencement address, ***“Never Give Up!”***

Once, on a plane flight, William Wrigley was asked why he continued to advertise his chewing gum since Wrigley’s dominated the market. He gazed out the window and suggested that, since the plane was flying along nicely, why not cut the engines? He understood that markets constantly change and advertising results today are temporary at best. To reap ongoing rewards requires us to keep the marketing “engines” running strong.

Keep running ads, and keep testing new ads. When a new “challenger” out pulls your old “control” ad, run it again and validate your results (to make sure it wasn’t a one-hit wonder). If it proves itself better, scrap the old ad and use the new AND create *another* challenger ad to repeat the cycle.

Stay consistent by constantly reviewing your results, tweaking and massaging your messages, and testing new approaches, keywords, and sites to advertise on. Discipline is the key element of consistence. Combining consistency with *persistence* - the stubborn determination to “Never Give Up!” - is an unbeatable combination, especially if you have the marketing knowledge and insight to create a successful campaign (which we cover in this Report).

Sound like a lot of work? It is - that’s where persistence comes in. Back in the day, all the tracking of ad results had to be done by hand. Now, for online advertising, there are affordable programs that track the metrics of your advertising, yielding goldmines of Reports. There’s just no reason NOT to test and track and constantly improve results.

***Always track results. Always test new ads. Always improve results.
And remember, today’s best is tomorrow’s test.***

Throughout this Report, we will delve into each of these “Three Keys” in a much more detail. We will refer to a multitude of techniques and strategies that apply to many different types of media, but our primary focus will be online marketing and advertising. Using the techniques and strategies described in this Report will ensure your campaigns will ultimately succeed, and succeed in a big way!

Section I: The Art Of Marketing

There are three creative areas generally tapped for online advertising: *Copy (the writing itself), Graphics and Site Design*. Each of these three are important, but not equally so. Graphics and Site Design can enhance, or detract from, compelling copywriting. The value of each is obvious, but ultimately they play a supporting role, because *only copy can actually make the sale*. Therefore,

Your greatest focus and attention should be to describe and sell your products or services effectively.

Keeping this in mind, we'll look at the first two briefly and then proceed to the matter of writing compelling, selling copy.

Chapter One: Graphics and Website Design

Graphics

Good graphics are important, both for banner ads as well as your website. Colors are important, as are images. Without going into a lot of subtle psychological reasons, bright colors attract initial interest most, while subdued colors are easier for overall reading. Probably 80% of the banner ads online use reds and yellows as their primary colors. I'll leave the color choices up to you, as long as you *test different ones*. Yes, even colors are open for testing! And while you're at it, take the time to test different graphic images and ads using the same offer. Everything on your site and in your ads should be measured up to the performance test.

Graphics have the ability to distract or attract visitors, and to enhance or reduce results. Images and design can support the sale, or they can be disconnected entirely from the purpose of the site. We've all been to websites with miscellaneous clipart and images that do nothing for the site (except slow down the loading of the pages). It's better to have NO images on a site than to have images that take away from the purpose of the site.

Avoid superfluous images to fill space. Images should be carefully chosen, with the underlying thought that an image is worth a thousand words. Each image should directly relate to the topic of your webpage or ad, or to your company, products or services.

Develop a cohesive look and flow. If your ad promotes a specific product or service, and links to your homepage, it would seem obvious that the same (or related) information should be present on your homepage, right? We have all seen this most simple of concepts violated on the Web - to our own frustration! Have your graphics designer work closely with your website designer, to create a cohesive look and feel that works.

Avoid stretches of reverse type. This is where the type is white (or a lighter color) against a darker background. This can be highly-effective in short bursts (like headlines or subheads), but it becomes hard to read after just a few words. Along these lines, avoid a lot of *italicized* or **bold** copy... if you don't believe this, test it. A longtime taboo on the Internet is the use of ALL CAPS. Historically, this is interpreted as yelling at your reader. While this attitude has softened a bit since the World Wide Web commercialized the Net, be very selective when using all uppercase letters - it's best to use them only for impact, never for a sentence or a long phrase. Mixing too many different fonts, font sizes, colors and styles can change your results - usually for the worse!

The Artistry of Marketing must always be measured by its effectiveness!

Many of the graphics areas that you should personally supervise are covered in the next section, regarding your website design. Because many of the points that relate to the overall site design also relate to graphics (the website not only incorporates graphics, it becomes visually a graphic “image” itself), let’s look at the elements of site design that can positively or adversely affect your marketing.

Website Design

Once a visitor arrives at your site, will they stay? Why should they? More importantly, will they act? Again, why? Getting a response to your ad is step one - getting them to explore the pages of your site and take action, whether making a purchase or filling out an information form, is where the rubber meets the road. A key element in the success of your site is the overall site design.

Some features should be obvious to anyone who has surfed the Web. For example, **avoid large images and graphics** on your website, at least on the initial landing page. Offering higher-resolution images as an option is OK, but don’t get excited when you hear how everyone has access to broadband (cable, DSL, T-1 and other high-speed connections). The majority of Web users still do NOT have broadband on their personal computer, so glitzy, graphics-laden sites that take too long to load can be the kiss of death. Use small thumbnail graphics instead. **If they have to wait too long, they’ll be gone.**

The same is true for sound, animation and video files. Give them the option of downloading both small files or larger ones, but don’t just give them a link and drop a 10 meg file on their browser. It’s too easy for them to say, “Adios!” and leave, right in the middle. If your big pitch was in the audio or video, guess what? They never heard it!

When was the last time you *personally* clicked through the jungle of your company’s site? Don’t leave this to the company tech! As wild as it may seem, you’re probably better suited to do this if your computer skills are about equal to your knowledge of tuning jet engines! Even better, develop a circle of friends to review your site - including some elderly folks. They’ll tell it to you straight, and notice things that you may be oblivious to!

When you look at your site, don’t let personal “likes” and “dislikes” influence your perception. Who cares if the company color is a shade darker than it should be? Or if the staff pictures were taken on a casual Friday?

There’s no need to tear down the house to remodel the kitchen!

Keep the good, improve the rest! Before ditching your current site and starting from scratch, use a little marketing savvy to add sizzle to your site. Ask yourself,

“Does my company site make it easy – or difficult – to do business with us?”

Your e-commerce site should be more than a brochure or a “24-hour salesperson.” It speaks volumes about the value you put on integrity, customers, quality products and services. Here are 12 points to use when doing a comprehensive site review. This guide will help you address the key issues with your web designer, to ensure your site is finely-tuned for generating sales.

Key Points To Review With Your Web Designer:

1) Does The Overall Site Design Work?

Does your site feel natural? Are the colors coordinated? Do visitors waste time wondering who you are, what you do, or how to find what they want? Is it cluttered with offers and banner ads? Look at each and every page on the site, not just the homepage.

Your site should flow easily for your guests. They want to wander, but give them some direction, some clues. They want to explore, but they want the “theme park” version, not the real jungle! With some friendly nudging, they’ll follow your lead - right to the sale!

We’re going to talk more about tracking later, but here we’re specifically looking at your website. What are your top five most visited pages? Does your copy draw visitors into your site? Are there subtle links in the copy to whisk them to a product that *solves their need!*? I never recommend you include links to other sites! You’ve spent good money building a site and marketing to get them to YOU, right? So why send them elsewhere?

There are only two exceptions to this, and both require that you get paid for the referral.

1) If you have your own products or services, don’t include outside links on your homepage, but on a special links page, and

2) If your site is a “shopping mall,” or an affiliate with lots of other sites (which all pay you for clickthrus or sales). In these cases, then add the links, liberally. Use every effort you can to include textlinks that glorify the other site (or product or service), and spotlight these links in your newsletter directly to your registered visitors as well. In other words, make your mall site dynamic, not passive, if you want to make money with it.

2) Degree Of Coolness

How “cool” is your site? I rate sites on a “Coolness Scale” from 1 to 10: 1 = Too low, too boring and stale; and 10 = Too high: too many flashy “gee whiz,” hi tech distractions that keep out visitors with older modems and browsers.

Nobody wants a dull, boring site, but don’t get carried away trying to make your site the coolest on the Net. Sure, it should look current and sharp, but don’t overdo cool. Your core site doesn’t need a lot of high-tech “gee-whiz” junk to do a profitable e-commerce business. Besides, too much high-tech shuts out visitors with older modems/browsers.

There’s always been a curve of today’s technology vs. yesterday’s architecture. Intel Corporation’s CEO Gordon Moore, first presented his famous “Moore’s Law” in 1965, stating that processing power (measured as transistors on a chip) would double every two years. Corresponding to this, costs have decreased exponentially to the point that a million dollars worth of processor power in 1965 costs about \$35 today! This doesn’t just apply to chips. The newest fastest chip is the architecture that allows the technicians to calculate the design of the next generation chip. Likewise, today’s software (including browsers) provide the platform for the new and exciting programs of the future.

Here’s the rub: the users and designers who must have the latest, greatest software or technique, are technologically a couple of “generations” ahead of most users. So, when we average mortals try to access one of these “supercool” sites, we get weird, distorted graphics, messages telling us we have to download some program, upgrade, or “plug-in” just to see their site, or worse - our browser just freezes up!

Whenever possible, dumb down your website.

Don't require your visitors to download a particular browser version, or some special software to view your site or read your sales pitch! Sure, give them the option for downloads (ie, Adobe Reader, RealAudio, Flash, etc.), but don't make it a requirement. Always make the same information available in other, lower tech ways as well. How would you like to walk into Wal-Mart and have the greeter stop you and say you have to go back home and get a red shirt to shop there? It sounds silly, and it is! Yet many websites do the same thing to their visitors - it's as though they don't want their money unless they have some particular piece of software!

Ask yourself: Do I always download the newest upgrade, as soon as it becomes available? Do I automatically download special programs to get the "best view" of a website? The average user's browser is 1-2 versions behind the ones currently available. And the fact is, most folks are scared silly of downloading anything off the Net and the thought of trying to install anything on their computer gives them the shakes (for fear they'll screw it up and need an expensive tech to come help them out!) To require your site visitors to do so is to create an obstacle to commerce on your site. Remember the KISS Principle (Keep It Stupid Simple) when it comes to cool.

3) Loadability/Multi-Browser/Older Browsers

This one goes hand-in-glove with point Number 2. If your site is too "state-of-art," you may be shutting out the majority of your market. The paradox is, most designers have the latest, greatest, fastest tools, while most customers struggle with 15" screens and 3-year old browsers on computers that load slower than a snail!

Loadability generally relates to bandwidth, or the speed your site loads when it's accessed. We've already discussed loadability features like over-intense use of graphics or audio/video files that drag out download time and cause visitor fallout. Although accessibility to broadband (defined as download speeds of over 128K; denoting 128 kbps, or kilobits per second; a kilobit is 1024 bits of data) is gaining, especially for businesses, the majority of U.S. households still rely on POTS (plain old telephone service) connections of 56K at the most. If your site loads quickly, even on a 56K phone modem, you have opened the door to the majority of users.

Even though it's a novel concept, have your designer check your site using a regular phone line and modem. Make sure they clear their browser memory cache before they review the site (so they're looking at it live and not pulling up dormant files from their own computer).

More than bandwidth, ***how does your site look when it's loaded?*** What does your visitor see when they arrive? If your site won't load properly in older browsers like **Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE) 5.0** or **Netscape 5.0**, you've probably over-designed it. If it loads on even older versions than this (when I review a site, I check it on an even older Netscape version, 4.1.), you're reaching a lot of people your competition may be missing. And looking to the future, with growing security issues surrounding IE, more people are looking at alternative browsers, including ones such as Opera.

Are you ready to write off prospects because of their browser choice?! Of course not! Sure, most people, at least in the U.S., use Internet Explorer but 10-20% use Netscape or some other browser. While most webpages look great in both IE and Netscape, some may look weird in one or the other, or not be visible at all. There are still millions of Netscape users, and if your business includes customers outside the U.S., chances are even greater they're using Netscape. And, probably an older version at that! Watch your website numbers to determine the percent of visitors using the various browsers, and have your designer check your site using (at least) both of these common browser versions,.

If your techno-designer tells you nobody uses Netscape, don't listen. When they say, "Why don't they just get the newest version, or a faster modem?" or when they proudly show you their new Flash page, which requires everyone to download the newest plug-in, just ask them, "Why not just require all customers to drive red cars and live in two-story homes?" Your designer's technical level shouldn't dictate what customers can access your site! Tell them **you want to reach as many people as possible**, and you don't care what their browser or software choices are! Your business is reaching prospects where they're at, NOT where some high-tech whiz-kid thinks they *should* be!

Designers like fooling around with their toys. It's fun. It's interesting to see what they can do with the software and equipment they have. They are talented, intelligent people. However, your site is not designed for them, it's for your prospects and customers. Microsoft purposely built so many proprietary codes into Explorer (and of course, all design software caters to this), that designers often have to specially edit your site so it can be viewed on Netscape (the original browser standard)! What a great marketing twist! Many U.S. sites freeze up completely when people try to view them in older Netscape versions!

The objective of your site is to reach as many people as possible, capture as many names as possible, and convert as many into sales as possible.

It's not your job to make sure all of your visitors have the latest, greatest software upgrades, from Microsoft or anyone else! It's your job to make a site that they can see with the simplest, most standard programs possible. Unless, of course, your site *sells* them the newer software!

4) Easy-To-Use Links

Are your links clear and concise or contain "industry speak?" Is your frequently asked questions page called "FAQs" or "Common Questions?" Keep it simple (KISS).

If you use "buttons," are they easy to read? Do they correspond to actual pages? Or will visitors be frustrated as they navigate your site? Do you put some links on buttons on the side, others across the top, and the rest at the bottom (and even more buried within your text)? Using the suggestions above, reduce the visible links (buttons, etc.) into logical groups. Standardize the links, and use links in your copy to grammatically direct people to the pages as part of a sentence of text.

Using links within your text lets you direct your visitors in a brief, narrative style. Not only that, but the major search engines like to see keywords that appear within your page copy. In fact, using your keywords carefully in this fashion maximizes your search engine optimization strategies, to keep your free search listings higher on the list.

Too many links or too few, can create confusion. If it's necessary to have a lot of links, try organizing them in subgroups by combining your link topics wherever possible. Pull-down menus may help sort them or try creating new links to "directory" pages for major topics. For example, your "News" and "Our Staff" pages can be combined within the "About Us" page. Remember, though, when you include topical "directory pages," you've used one of your **"three clicks."**

Never, Under Any Circumstances, Violate The "Three Click Rule!"

This is an essential rule of the "Brantley Maxims of Marketing". Your visitors should NEVER be more than THREE clicks away from whatever they want on your site! One click to a "directory" page, say "Books." A second to an individual category like, "Business Books." By their next link they should be able to reach the

specific book(s) they want. (If you can get them there sooner, DO!). If your inventory is too extensive for visitors to sort through everything in three clicks, it's time to invest in a search program for your site.

The key, absolute truth here is that every time a click is required, a customer is lost. The more clicks required, the more drop off your site. This doesn't mean you should put everything on your homepage and make them scroll down the page for ten minutes! Having "exploratory" links so they can do their "due diligence" is fine. You see, they're choosing to go further into your site. This is different from frustrating them in the process.

I once had a major national catalog site as a client. Their idea was to lay out their website like a catalog, with six items on a page, and you clicked to the "next page." There's nothing wrong with that, only there was no way to go from page 2 to page 12, or jump back to page 4. You had to click, click, click backwards and forwards through their site. That's how the marketing manager thought it should be - like turning pages! Interestingly, their site never performed (until after their marketing manager retired!).

The fewer clicks required, the better! Enough said.

5) Value For Visitors: A Reason To Register & A Reason to Return

Now we get down to the nitty-gritty of having an e-commerce site. What is the primary purpose for your website? To sell your products or to build a list of qualified leads? From a marketing perspective the answer is obvious:

The number one objective of any site is to build a database of interested, qualified leads!

I realize this flies in the face of conventional wisdom, which is fixated on measuring how many dollars the Internet department spent versus how much it earned, quarter-by-quarter.

Conventional Wisdom is almost always wrong!

I didn't say your *overall objective* of your marketing and advertising was to get leads, just the number one focus. Why? Because your entire marketing program should include front-end and back-end campaigns. We'll cover these in more detail in Chapter Three, but for now, you cannot have backend marketing without leads. And, you cannot have more than one shot to sell a lead if you don't have a mechanism to capture their information!

Content Makes The Difference

Do you give visitors any reason to return, or are their only options to "buy or die?" Accept that 90% WON'T buy on their first visit! To get them back, give them value: real content (not just sales copy)!

At the minimum, you should strive to have a site worthy of being bookmarked for a later visit. Your "bigger picture" focus should be to get them to register. If your total focus is "Buy Now!" and a visitor says "Nopel!" then you have wasted your time, effort and money to get them to clickthru to your site for NO reason! On the other hand, if you **capture their email and other information**, you can direct market to them repeatedly, improving your ROI dramatically.

Most studies agree that it takes 5-10 contacts to make the average sale. Give them a good reason to leave their name and email address! Everything else is secondary, including first visit sales. Most online marketers

focus their entire business plan on direct site sales, when getting qualified leads is every bit as important, if not more so. Only with an interested database can you actively reach out and bring them back, and get a second chance (or third, fourth, etc.).

EVERY visitor who clicks thru to your site is an interested, qualified LEAD! Why? Because they have *responded to your ad* based on some degree of *interest in your product or services*. It's hard to find an email list more targeted than that! So give them some incentive to sign up: a newsletter, a report such as this one, an e-book, forum, membership privileges - something to encourage them to leave (at least) their email address, along with other pertinent information.

Content transforms your site into a valuable resource for up-to-date information on your industry, products, services, and related needs your customers may share. You may include stories, links, tips, glossary, and frequently asked questions. But be creative! You don't have to develop it all! Let your visitors create some, in the form of bulletin board postings, testimonials, chat rooms, photos, etc.

Do this well, and soon you'll have an "opt-in" email database full of interested leads! And when they're ready to purchase, guess where they'll turn!

6) Salability Of Site

While on the surface this seems to contradict the last point, in reality these two points actually complement each other: ***If your site can't tell, it can't sell!*** And if it doesn't sell *itself*, why would anyone leave their name or email address, much less give you their credit card information?!

Is your copy subtle, tasteful, and friendly? ***That's great, but does it SELL?*** Does it need more punch? More passion? Not just a few closing "pitches," but casual, subtle trial closes throughout the site.

Use open and closed probes in your language. Create the sense of interaction, of conversation with your visitors. Ask them questions, anticipate answers. Closed probes should always be "Yes" answers (NEVER ask a closed probe that is a "No," it can transfer a negative mindset to your product or service). Open probes should get them in agreement with you: imagine them nodding their heads as they read. That's the kind of response you want, right? *See what I mean?*

You're selling your knowledge, your expertise, your accessibility, your competence, your success stories, and much more.

Make sure your site copy is specifically written to deliver these messages to your online audience. Good informational content helps you deliver your message "under their radar!" Case histories, testimonials, email questions answered with authority - all send the credibility message again and again, without you blowing your own horn. We'll cover more about ***Writing Compelling Copy*** in Chapter Two.

7) Shopping Cart

If you utilize a shopping cart on your site, make sure it's the right one for you. When was the last time you placed an order yourself? When I do a Website Review I actually place an order on your site to see if your buggy is user-friendly, or an obstacle to e-commerce!

All buggies are not created equal!

Some buggies only allow one level of selection. As Henry Ford put it, “You can have it in any color you want, as long as it’s black!” What if you sell identical shirts different styles for women or men, in different colors and sizes, with gift notes or not, with different packaging options? What if you want to offer different ship-to addresses? How about a popup at a critical point in the process to offer them an upsell special? Many off-the-shelf carts TILT at concepts such as these!

Can you imagine a retail store keeping a poorly-trained checkout clerk on the job, one that was costing them sales and creating bad shopping experiences for their customers? Learn your capabilities and limitations and if your current shopping cart doesn’t meet your needs, fix it or replace it!

Conclusion

These key points are a great start. Get in touch with your site BEFORE you start changing it. Use these points to critically review your website, and direct the changes that are needed to make it SELL! Ultimately, it’s YOUR business. Take charge and get your site in shape - make it a lean, mean selling machine!

Chapter Two: Writing Compelling Copy For Maximum Sales

Copy is the marketing term for the special kind of writing used in advertising and marketing. Not everyone can write well, even fewer can create compelling sales pieces that bring a reader to a buying close. This Chapter will give you a "crash course" in copy writing.

Your marketing piece can be a brochure, sales letter, ad, or any variety of electronic media. For the purpose of this Chapter, we will focus on Pay-Per-Click ads, banner ads, online articles and website copy.

Remember, everything you do should be tested and retested. Your working ad is your "control," and your control can always be improved. Hand-in-glove with this is the ***Number One Copywriting Rule***:

Don't fall in love with your copy!

Pride of authorship will cripple your efforts. It doesn't matter if you think your website copy or ad is good. It doesn't matter if your staff, your spouse, your brother-in-law or your golf buddies love it.

The only thing that matters is results!

So, as I stated earlier, if the copywriting itself is the "art," then it must be measured against the ***Science of Marketing***. The only "good" copy is copy that successfully sells.

AIDA: The tried and true approach.

In sales, the "AIDA" approach is one of, if not the oldest and most natural sales track to follow. An ad or website sell is no different than an actual face-to-face sales presentation of your goods or services. Here are the "AIDA" steps as they relate to a compelling sales piece:

Attention. It must attract and hold attention.

Interest. Copy must stimulate interest.

Desire. It must carry conviction and turn interest into desire.

Action. To be successful, it must lead to a buying decision.

Every online ad, article, sales letter, brochure, radio/TV spot, and website should be scrutinized against the AIDA checklist. When reviewing copy, each component should be looked at individually, and as part of the whole.

The Basic Components Of Sales Copy

Headline
Greeting
Body

Transition
Features & Benefits
Building Credibility

Offer and Close
Signature
Postscript

One of the great advantages of online copy that NO other media can offer is the instantaneous hotlink. In fact, linking webpages is actually the foundation of Tim Berners-Lee's great conception: the World Wide Web. Marketers look at links in a different way - they are not just a functional feature of a website, but a strategic added tool to incorporate into our sell.

We utilize links to divide a traditional sales letter into bite-sized portions, to let our customer look us over and check us out at their own speed. One of the Web's greatest uses is for research - people like to feel like they are researching and doing "due diligence" on your company. Giving them the opportunity to "feel" this way, while still guiding their path through your site to the desired conclusion (giving you money!), is using the very nature of the Web to your advantage.

Forget websites that try to pump 8-page sales letters on their homepage! You can deliver the same information, but let them feel like they are "discovering" it on their own. At every turn use the basics of copywriting to compel them forward, and the characteristics of the World Wide Web to draw them closer. It's like a dance where you lead -- but your partner doesn't feel pushed along. Instead, they feel like a partner with you! I call this...

Coming In Under Their Radar!

So here are the key components of our online website sales "letter," the main pages necessary for an e-commerce site:

The Basic Components Of A Marketing Website

Homepage About Us Common Questions (FAQs)	Products/Services (Features & Benefits) Testimonials	Free Sign Up Shopping Cart
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Combined, these different components all play an active role in making your sales copy more (or less) effective and compelling. Let's take them one by one, comparing the copy components with the ones on this website list)

The Headline

The headline is the single most read portion of your copy. It catches the "**A**ttention" of your reader. It should be no more than 7 - 15 words. It doesn't hurt to have a subhead (smaller, secondary related headline, either with the main headline or throughout the body copy), to extend the thought of the main headline.

Begin every word with a capital letter, using upper and lower case type ("Title Case"); Limit your use of ALL CAPS (readers consider this screaming, especially in online marketing). Also use only a modest amount of italicized or bold type, as reading these styles quickly becomes tiresome to your viewers.

In regular print you will almost always see a serif font like "Times-Roman," bold and sized about 18 points for headlines. Serifs are the little tails you see on these letters. Online you will most likely see a sans-serif font like Arial. This is an example of a "sans serif" type, or one without serifs. For credibility and to make your headline stand out, serif is generally better, even online.

The headline has to capture their attention, hit a hot button, and draw them into the copy. Write 15-20 headlines and read them aloud. Do they answer "why?" and "so what?" questions?

- ✓ ***"Why should I (your prospect) read further?"***
- ✓ ***"Why should I believe it?"***
- ✓ ***"Why should I act on it?"***

✓ **"So? What's In It For Me?"**

"What's in it for me?" (**WIIFM**) is the most important question of all. If your copy doesn't answer this satisfactorily, all of your efforts will be in vain. For online ads, your headline may often be your entire copy, much as a billboard has its entire message in just a few words. In this case, make sure the words you choose are compelling enough to get their **Attention** AND generate enough **Interest** to initiate an **Action** (a clickthru. Be sure your website copy fills the **Desire** requirement in once they click thru.

Along the same line of thought, try to write "**YOU**" copy as much as possible. After all, your viewer's purchase is not about you, it's about them! Try to include some of these other powerful words in your headline:

Free	Notice	When
Now	How To	Save
Today	Why	Yes
New	Here's	Finally
Stop	Which Of These	Warning
How	Who Else	
Don't	Where	

Use words that are absolutes, words that make it personal, words that promise, words with a sense of urgency. The headline can make a statement or ask a question. It can raise curiosity. Generally, it shouldn't try to be humorous. Remember always, it has to answer the "why?" and "so what?!" – the **WIIFM** questions. You have to bring it home to their interests, their needs.

Your approach can be positive, or negative. Above all, make sure your copy isn't BORING!

Affirmative headlines are upbeat, "feel good". It creates a positive mood for the letter. Be cautious with negatives. They play on fears. Your website copy will need to be correspondingly positive to show how you **solve their fears**.

The main purpose of your headline is to capture their **Attention** and draw them into your body copy. Promise them a benefit, or state part of the offer in the text of the headline.

"How You Can Earn More Income Than You Ever Imagined By Making Money While You Sleep!"

If possible, try to create some affinity with your audience:

"42% of Online Businesses Are Making Money! What Do They Know That You Don't?"

"Find Out What 232 Auction Sites Are Already Using To Make Six-Figure Incomes!"

The headline can also be used to serve notice:

"Warning! Don't Put Another Product On Your Site Until You Read This!"

There are hundreds of good models for headlines. I personally keep a file of the most effective ones I've tested, as well as those used over the last 50 years or so by successful direct marketers. To enhance your marketing efforts, set up a file on your computer and save headlines or copy that stand out. But be cautious! Try to find and keep those that are obviously effective at getting results, at generating click-thrus and conversions. 90% of agency-created pieces are designed to win awards, not *sell*.

The Greeting

The Greeting is the part in-between the headline and the body copy. It's a bridge. It may be no more than a sentence or two that helps your online visitor transition from the headline into the body. It is a vital bridge that can draw your prospect in, or turn them off. Most important, it can make or break your viewers' sense of affinity with you and your offerings.

The best headline in the world falls flat on its face if the greeting is flat or insults the reader.

Your greeting should be cordial, but not too mushy. It should be as personal as possible, but don't overstep the line by using false intimacy.

It can be as simple as, "Welcome to our site!" Or, it can continue the thought of the headline, "As if that wasn't enough..." It can be a direct statement, "If you thought all online wine stores were the same..." Or, it can ask a question, "How do you handle your company's travel plans?" Here, and in all of your copy, try to identify with and connect with your viewers wherever possible - build affinity.

The Body

The "body of evidence" is the part where you draw the reader in and begin building a case for your products or services. Once you have gained their **Attention** in your Headline and demonstrated affinity in your Greeting, the Body is where you pique their **Interest** and bring them to a point of **Desire**.

First, you must warm up your reader, so engage in a little foreplay. Relax a bit with them, tell a story, make an analogy or use a metaphor. Use some mechanism to illustrate a point, a problem, or a need. Here's an example used successfully for a company selling Websites.

"I was speaking at a business club a few weeks ago, and a business owner came up to me with the most defeated look imaginable. She said she appreciated my talk, then blurted out: I know I should be doing more online. All my competitors are so far ahead of me it feels hopeless. I just don't know where to begin with my outdated website, and I'm scared to death of spending thousands of dollars for a website nobody can find!"

This story establishes a problem, one we'll be sure to solve! Using bullet points and paragraphs, begin sharing your features and benefits. Weave in testimonials and other credibility builders, wherever possible.

As you write, include links within the text to other key areas of your site. For example, when you use a testimonial, it could read like this:

"Read why [Joe Jacobs](#) said, "This is the most incredible resource I've found anywhere!"

Here the customer's name doubles as a textlink to the *Testimonials Page*, specifically to Joe Jacobs' testimonial. You can also include links like this:

"And no matter what, our [24-hour "On Your Side" Support](#) will make sure your system is always running smoothly."

Here, [24-hour "On Your Side" Support](#) is our link directly to our *Tech Support* page. You don't always have to use the same wording in the body that you may use for the button links on your page. For example,

“Although dozens of products have come and gone over the years, our [Viscomm 3000](#) has stood the test of time and continues to outperform them all.”

[Viscomm 3000](#) becomes the link to the *Features & Comparisons* page, even though we didn't refer directly to the page itself. Using this technique allows a visitor to leave one page and “research” you, all the while going exactly where you want him to go: to another page selling the features and benefits of your product or service.

In the same way, weave the FAQ (frequently asked questions) into your body and link to this page, and never miss the opportunity to toss in a link to your Order page or Sign Up form.

Just as with the Headline, always write your body copy in a **"YOU"** voice, with “you” being “them!” Tell your visitor how your product or service will help them and **what it will do for THEM**. That's what they want to know - not how big you are, how much customized equipment your shop has, how many lines you carry, or even if you're "#1!" They are less interested in the specific details of your product -- the features, the “steak” -- and are looking more for the sizzle – the benefits to them.

The biggest danger most business owners face is, they know too much about their product or service. Who cares?! Your prospect's question is, "What will it do for me?!"

Use everyday, easily understood language. What you say is more important than how precisely you say it. Don't talk over their heads with technical precision, **speak to their emotions with benefits**. You need to get their agreement and reaction on a deeper level than logic alone. ***It's true, most purchases are made based on emotions, not logic!***

That being said, the use of facts can strengthen their decision to buy, but don't think of facts as dry, hard data. Present the facts in headline form, showing them once again what the fact means to them, to their business. ***With every line strive to drive home the point of what it means to them!*** We are deluged with useless information - make your information eye-opening, driving home your sales points, bringing them to a close.

Making The Transition To The Offer And Close

We'll continue guiding our visitor to a purchase decision:

“Like many business owners, she knew that she needed to move her business ahead online. All of her other efforts were rooted in the past. We've worked with dozens of businesses in the same spot. She needed real solutions, right now!

“Don't take it from me! Here's what [John Brand](#), owner of "Wires, Wicker, And Wigwams" has to say: Our 5-year old business never sold outside a three-county area. In only six months, I've had orders from 16 states and 7 foreign countries - my little shop's a global business now!"

See how the story is moving from problem to solution. The transition phase lets you smoothly move from initial concept or problem, to ways that your specific services and products offer a solution. The transition lets you do this without being "in their face". Working some testimonials into the copy gives you the opportunity to say things you normally wouldn't say yourself, things best said by a satisfied customer. They can brag on you more convincingly than you can brag on yourself. Use testimonials and case histories liberally, to strengthen your examples and key points throughout your copy.

Now it's time to begin bulleting the key points of the sale. Using "mini headlines", list out the features and give the benefits of each one. Be sure to "bring it home" with each benefit - answer the "so what?!" This is where the

Desire must be built. We will move from this stage directly to the close and offer steps, so this foundation must be built carefully.

Building Features and Benefits

When you describe a *feature* of your product or service, always follow with the *benefit*... how it helps your visitor solve their problem or fill their need: the *WIIFM!* Let's continue with the website company as our example:

- **You don't need to be a computer expert!** Even if you're computer illiterate, your customers aren't, and they want to buy from you online.
- You don't have to be a tech-head! Let us be your partner in the techie department, as well as marketing. **You can focus on what you do best: running your business!**
- **You get a 24/7 Employee.** Imagine a salesperson who never stops, never slows down, and doesn't ask for a raise!
- **Marketing Expertise, not just computer know-how.** We bring you the best team of online marketers in the business. **Anyone can sling together a webpage - we work to help you make money online!**

Five or ten of these bullets, each with a tie-in to the prospect, will create an overwhelming case for your products or services.

The next step in the letter is to take their **Desire** and Close them on the Offer - get them to order, call, fax, register, or whatever our **call to Action** requires.

Offer and Close

“The clock is ticking. A wise seer once discerned that,

"Insanity is continuing to do things the same way and expecting different results!"

Yet, how many fellow business-owners do you know, who keep doing things the way they always have and then whine and complain about the market, the season, the weather, and any other reason they can blame their lack of business on.

Don't fall into that trap! Successful businesses have to be decisive, to take *action*. Are you a proactive, decisive owner? Here's the deal: We will email you our Special Report, presented at this year's conference, Absolutely Free. Why? Because we want to raise the bar for online marketing, and because we know that if we help enough people succeed, we'll succeed.”

The closing and offer should be simple and forthright. Make it easy to make the decision to do business with you, without a lot of strings attached!

Signature

The purpose of a signature is to personalize your communications. Think of it as personalizing your marketing, from you (your company) to each individual visitor. I've seen a number of sites where the founder or owner has

“signed” a pledge or promise of quality or a guarantee. In cases like this, such a signature can be very effective. Another way to personalize a website is with cookies that welcome the visitor by name, or “remember” their preferences shown in their previous visit. Although not a classic “signature,” it subtly serves to tell them that you care about them, as an individual, not as a faceless number in a mass market.

Another type of “signature” is the combination “contact us” and “P.S.” included in every marketing email you send to your prospects and customers. Your digital “signature” should contain all of your contact information, company slogan or mission, and website address. In email, this will decrease the number of “removes” and increase your response rate, by letting your recipients quickly see and know exactly who you are. Since email recipients often forget when they signed up for an email newsletter and other offers, your digital signature jogs their memory.

The Postscript/The Order Page

Most people think of a P.S. in a letter as an afterthought. As incredible as it may seem, in a salesletter the P.S. is the second most-read copy after the headline! The vast majority read the headline, then skip to the P.S. before deciding to read or toss the letter, so the P.S. should always restate the offer.. Since often fewer than 2 percent read and respond to direct mail (as with most marketing), it is extremely important that the headline and P.S. be thought out as thoroughly as possible to maximize their impact. No wonder professional copywriters spend half of their total writing time on the Headline and the P.S.!

The Order page is the “P.S.” of your site: It’s here you should clearly restate your offer (exactly what your offer is, what the bonuses are, what your guarantee is, etc.) and tell them how to respond. *Never* have an Order Page that’s nothing more than a bunch of fields to be completed! For now we’ll only cover Order Pages with a fixed number of options, either for purchased products or a free download or subscription. We’ll cover Shopping Carts for multiple or more complex orders later.

The visitor who jumps the gun and goes directly to your Order Page doesn’t necessarily want to “order now!” Just look at your site stats and see how many visitors who exit after reaching your order page! This alone tells you it needs work! Most often, the Order Page has ZERO information other than the form fields (and maybe a meager “All fields must be completed.”).

Often your visitor may only have a question on shipping and handling costs or delivery time. Having a shipping calculator or flat fees listed here, or a link to specific shipping questions in your FAQs will help to keep your visitors involved and interested. It’s also a good place to add a last minute bonus, to sweeten the pot, like Free Shipping or Free Hotline for 90 Days.

Just as with your other pages, the message on your Order Page should be in compelling, selling copy, speckled with links back into your site, for example,

“If you have ANY question, please feel free to Contact Us or visit our Frequent Questions page. We want to help!”

Other than the homepage, more online sales are killed on the Order Page than any other single page of your site. Remember, the Headline (homepage) is number one in readership, the P.S. (Order Page) is number two. These are usually the top two exit pages for almost every site I’ve ever analyzed. If you don’t create **AIDA** here, you may never have another chance!

Shopping Cart

When a website has more than a limited number of products or services, a digital “shopping cart” program is necessary. The only problem is, these are generally pretty sterile, functional programs. The shopping cart, like the Order page, can make or break you. Determine right now to obtain or build a proprietary cart at the earliest feasible time... one that will be flexible and enhance your selling efforts with variety and simple “sale” or “bonus” features for your visitors.

Make sure your buggy works, and test it once a week with a real purchase. Walk through it and look for ways it can be improved to streamline and reduce the amount of work your customers have to do to buy from you. Very often, when we click “Add to cart” on a website, we leave the friendly site behind and enter a cold world only interested in data entry skills. You will still want to include an initial page similar to an Order page, one that restates the offer and also briefly explains the shopping cart process to your visitors.

Other Website Components

We’ve covered the major components of good sales copy as it relates to online marketing and the major website components. Now we’ll look at other components, and how they can enhance the effectiveness of your website:

**Free Offer
Resources
Guarantee
Free Offer**

**Privacy Policy
Demo (if applicable)
Customer Forum**

**BBS
Chat
Tech help (if applicable)**

Offer something for free. Anything. It can be a downloaded Report such as this, or a Free Product Trial, a newsletter of interest to your industry, or a free analysis or consultation - anything you can reasonably offer to capture an email address and other information. All of these increase the odds of getting a sale now, or getting a lead for future targeted marketing efforts. Remember Number 5 on the website checklist? The primary purpose for your website is to capture a name! With a name, you have more than one chance to make a sale - in fact, you have the chance to make many future sales to the same lead!

Resources

Having a Resource Section of applicable publications, organizations and other websites increases the probability that a visitor will bookmark your site (or sign up for a free membership). This gives you additional opportunities to market to them (through future visits) and can create a viral buzz on the Net that your site a good “resource” to check out.

Becoming A Resource Center is a powerful *under-the-radar* technique that takes a little work. However, it can be as simple as pulling your own “favorites” out and listing them on your site. You can also publicly ask your viewers to contact you with any suggestions for additional resources they have found useful, and add these to the list.

You may also have products or services that complement other sites with affiliate programs. If so, join their program and turn your Resource Section into additional revenue for your site. Contact all the websites you list (with or without affiliate programs) and ask them for a reciprocal link to your site. It can’t hurt, and ultimately it will create free references to your site all over the Web. In some cases, you may be able to sell advertising to key sites you list as well.

Guarantee

Do you have a guarantee? If not, why? Conventional Wisdom says a guarantee is a liability for a company: “What if they take advantage of me?” Remember though, Conventional Wisdom is almost always wrong, and

ultimately a guarantee is one of the strongest credibility tools to assure first-time visitors that it's OK to do business with you. And you can make your guarantee a super marketing tool if you don't let undue fears hold you back.

Ultimately, the FTC regulates guarantees and warranties. Here are some of the different types to consider:

Implied guarantee, recognized in all 50 states whether you state it or not. Essentially warranties that the product will do what you say it will do.

Money-back guarantee, where you agree to refund all or part of the sales price

Performance guarantee assures the customer that if your product/service doesn't perform, you will work with them until it does.

Workmanship or quality guarantee is limited to manufacturer's defects. If your product is manufactured by another company, their warranty to you will probably cover this area 100%, so tell your visitors about it on your site!

Satisfaction guarantee. This is powerful and absolute - a great sales point.

Don't make your guarantee too restrictive. Assume people will buy, use and like your product or service. Generally, the longer your guarantee, the lower the number of customers who will ever use it. You see, they forget all about it after awhile, assuming the product is doing what it's supposed to be.

Privacy Policy

Privacy issues and identity theft concerns are growing greater every day. Make it a point to assure your customers that you will not share or sell their information to anyone. This doesn't mean you can't send them an email newsletter with an ad from another company, but it does mean you won't send their personal information to another company. Which you won't anyway! Why share your hard-earned leads and customers with someone else? So tell your visitors about your Privacy Policy.

Demo (if applicable)

If you have software, a demo version is a great way to convince your visitors as well as get their contact information. The demo can be a downloaded "lite" version, a full version with a 30-day clock, or an online version they can access using a username and password (provided they give you other pertinent information at the time - with a demo you can ask for and receive more about them than for a free newsletter or other offer!) Every demo gets you deeply into the head and mind of a super qualified lead - one you can continue to market to until they buy.

Customer Forum

Customer Forums or bulletin boards (BBS) are an often-overlooked asset to almost any active e-commerce website. Yes, they take some monitoring, but wow! What benefits! You can get a real-time pulse of your market, gather together the most important questions on customers' minds, collect dozens of quotes and testimonials you can use on your site - the list goes on and on.

Just having a forum adds unique content to your website, generating interest and making you a valuable (and bookmarkable) resource for prospects and customers alike. And the longer you have it, the more useable content it creates for you!

Tech Help

Tech support is a valuable feature, although it's only for actual customers. Having it available says you stand behind your products in a substantial way. Along with a guarantee, online support is probably the strongest "under-the-radar" sales tool you can possibly have. I have worked with sites that have seen sales jump simply by adding this feature, yet handle only a handful of customer questions a month! Just having the security blanket of online support is enough!

Summary

Use every tool you can to make your website as interesting and desirable, as reassuring and as compelling as possible. In the early days of the World Wide Web, this was referred to as building a "sticky" site, one where visitors would bookmark it to return and be willing to register for the value-added content available. This type of site creates affinity with your visitors, building their comfort level with you and your level of sincerity. This is the key to converting more clicks into sales.

Chapter Three: Making Sure There's a "There" There *And Converting Clicks To Customers!*

OK, heads up! You've got a prospective customer on your website - now what? For most sites, you've only got a half minute or so to figure this out. It needs to be really clear, easy, obvious, and...oops! Too late! They've left already.

It's incredibly easy to put your shingle on the Web. Easy-to-use cookie-cutter programs make it easy for even "dummies" to build their own website. The "gold rush" mentality of the 90's resulted in thousands of these boring sites. The problem is when prospects click-thru to these sites, there's nothing to hold their interest.

There's no "there" there.

I'm of the opinion that the unimpressive performance of the "new economy" largely rests on the boring, useless quality of most business websites.

Boring Kills

It's a long-held maxim that a sales letter cannot be too long, only too boring. Boring kills marketing pieces. Boring also kills websites. What makes a site boring?

First of all, we're not talking about having the latest, greatest "gee whiz" bells and whistles on your site. Who cares? *You don't need to have the coolest, wildest, flashing and singing site.* Most of these programming gizmos (jumping text, floating palettes, background music, flashing messages, java tricks and flash "presentations," etc.) only serve to distract your prospect.

When choosing between cool and simple, rely on the KISS approach everytime!

Second: *You must have a clear purpose and plan for your site.* Measuring your site's success in total sales alone is not a purpose, it's an ostrich approach that ignores the marketplace.

So, where's the money supposed to come from?

The money is a result of a solid purpose and plan. Think about it. If you think your purpose is getting a prospect to your site to see your sales pitch and buy your product, you've ignored the number one tenet of marketing.

The ONLY question your prospect cares about is...WIIFM: "What's In It For Me?"

If your answer is, "Just give us your credit card and we'll show you..." you'll never get to finish your sentence, and you've destined your site to failure or at best, mediocrity.

Answer WIIFM and you'll turn clicks into customers, prospects into profits.

In comparing dozens of companies' website content with their sales brochures, I've found most contain identical information - often word-for-word! A brochure may be great to mail with a letter, or to hand to a prospect. But prospects don't come to your website to read a brochure.

Prospects come to your site to get to know more about *you!*

If a prospect came into your business, would you simply hand them a brochure and walk away? Of course not! Why would you think it would work online? You'd talk with them, answer their questions, offer them some additional information, let them browse, and make them feel comfortable, right? So, why not do these things with your website!?

Make your site a resource for your prospects

Your objective is to build relationships from casual clickthrus. To catch their interest, give them value, build trust, and generate some affinity and confidence in your company.

Give your visitors a reason

- 1) to return,
- 2) to bookmark your site,
- 3) to spend some time looking around,
- 4) to leave their name and contact information

You'll notice "buy" isn't one of these. Of course, you should have clear areas for them to shop and make buying decisions, but if you do the first part right, you'll have caught the interest of your market, and captured their name and email. Orders will come as a result of all that.

The name of the game is creating a list, so you get more than one shot at converting these "clicks" into customers.

I've consulted with sites that I've helped reach tens of thousands visitors a day. In more than one case, I could get them there, but they had no mechanism at all to capture information. Only a handful of visitors bothered to leave their names! Another client thought it clever to have all new visitors register just to get INTO their site (that'll get 'em)! That created total customer carnage - most simply left and revenues were dismal.

Can you imagine walking into a department store and asking a clerk for directions to the shoe department. What would your reaction be if they answered, "No problem, can I see some ID first?" Your relationship with your prospects doesn't include requiring personal information for them to *browse* through your site!

Still another client insisted on having a 28-question form for the visitors to fill out. 28 questions! I got thousands of people to respond to an email campaign to get their free issue of this client's magazine. Now, you'd think most folks who answer an ad for a *free item* would happily leave their information so they could get the item. Sure, some will change their mind at the last-second, but most won't bother to click-thru if they don't have some interest to begin with.

With this client, of almost 9,000 click-thrus, all but 24 hit their form and fell like flies! When presented with this information, would you, A) Start buying a lot more names and sending emails? B) Figure the email didn't work? Or C) Consider changing your registration form?

If you guessed "B," you and this client are on the same planet. Unbelievably, they figured their form was OK because it got THEM all the information THEY wanted. After all, it was the same one they used in print!

Just ask for basic information and give them some incentive to give it to you! You'll always have more than one chance to add more information to it, like when they BUY one of your offers in your newsletter!

Every additional piece of information you require when they "sign up" on your site costs you in lost registrants. Sort of like making them click five or six times to get somewhere - every click, every additional action or extra piece of information they have to give up will cause your numbers to go down.

The most powerful, valuable benefit your website can provide is a qualified database of interested prospects and customers.

The simple solution? Give them a reason to leave their name and email. Remember, **WIIFM!** A gift, bonus, coupon or certificate, sweepstakes, newsletter, subscription, discount, membership, or anything of value. The cost may be next to nothing, but it may be of value to your prospects (such as this special Report).

Get them in the loop, as quickly, easily and cheaply as you can. Then become an expert Back-End Marketer.

Work your site to generate repeat visits by adding interesting areas of real content. Make customer service an element in your site. Have frequent questions posted, perhaps a bulletin board where customers can post questions and testimonials. Develop a sense of community, of family, of *affinity*. This opens the door for promotions and offers especially for them. As your database builds, every offer you make will generate immediate and spontaneous revenue.

An effective e-commerce site takes some effort, but if it was all easy, 98% of the websites out there would be making money! The truth is - it is easier now than it has ever been to build and run a profitable website. There is loads of information you can tie into to add content to your site, tons of products you can offer that require nothing more than a coded affiliate link on your site, and thousands of programs even "dummies" can use to create a site, build affiliates, write ezines and newsletters, create databases, and on and on.

A true-blue productive, profitable website marketer goes way beyond putting up a 10-page sales brochure and an online order form. This is an ongoing effort, but with a little consistent attention, the rewards will be spectacular.

Section II: The Science Of Marketing

Chapter Four: Basic Marketing Concepts

For the purpose of this Report, there are two basic kinds of marketing: **Front-End and Back-End.**

Front-End Marketing is the marketing that you do to bring people to your site: PPC ads, banner ads, search engine optimization, print, TV, you name it. Logistically, **Back-End Marketing** begins after they click thru to your site and continues for as long as you are able to stay in touch with them.

Front-End marketing is obviously important, because you can't sell them if they don't come through the door. You have a lot of options to "push" them (or "pull" them) to your site. Essentially your options can be broken down as:

Passive vs. Active Marketing

Search engine placement, or Search Engine Optimization (SEO), is the most basic requirement for the front-end marketing your site. A free listing on a search engine is about as *passive* as you can get. People have to go to the search engine or directory, put in keywords that match your site, and then select your site as their most likely target from the thousands of sites listed. Other than refining your site's page titles, descriptions, and keywords, then writing *keyword-rich copy* and submitting your listing to the major engines, your ability to *influence or drive traffic* are passive.

So how can you actively market your site? The very best way is through **Pay-Per-Click Advertising** (PPC). Instead of hoping people will work down to your site on the search engine results list (studies show that over 90% of the leads from search engines go to the top ten companies for any given search!), **be proactive!** Google and other sites allow you to bid on choice words, keywords that describe your site, products or services. Google calls them "AdWords." The way you bid is to offer a certain dollar amount *per-click-thru*. This way, you are not paying for how many people *see* your ad (per impression), but how many take an initial action step and *actually click-thru* to your site. According to industry leader Pay Per Click Universe (<http://www.payperclickuniverse.com>), the top ten search engines for running pay per click ads are:

	View Reviews/Ratings:	Min. Deposit	PPCU Bonus	Open An Account
➤	Google AdWords	\$5	None	Register with Google AdWords
➤	Overture	\$30	\$50	Register with Overture
➤	ePilot™	\$100	None	Register with ePilot™
➤	SearchFeed	\$25	None	Register with SearchFeed
➤	7Search	\$25	None	Register with 7Search
➤	Search 123	\$50	\$20	Register with Search 123
➤	FindWhat	\$25	\$5	Register with FindWhat
➤	Kanoodle	\$5	\$5	Register with Kanoodle
➤	PageSeeker	\$25	None	Register with PageSeeker
➤	Enhance	\$50	\$25	Register with Enhance

Obviously, very few websites ever move from passive SEO. Why? Because SEO is essentially free, and most companies would rather enjoy the scraps they get from free placement than pay for leads.

Free search engine listings are worth what you pay for them!

Once you determine to actively *drive* your marketing, your marketing begins to come with a price tag. This is why most businesses consider marketing an expense. Measuring your results, which we'll cover later, is the key to making PPC work, as well as *making your online marketing an income center, not an expense.*

In the world of direct response marketing, there are other ways you can actively market your site using PPC, including joint ventures and creative relationships with other sites (competitive or non-competitive). Other ways to drive your marketing is by using affiliate programs, public relations to industry publications, local or regional presentations or sponsorships. Using PPC allows you to take the greatest control of your marketing, and not passively leave your results to chance.

Back-End Marketing

Once you get someone to your website, your marketing should not stop. Capturing names is a basic marketing technique. We've covered giving them a "reason to leave their name." Building a good list gives you the opportunity to market to an extremely qualified group of people, as often as you like (well, as often as the market will bear) Do you have regular back-end campaigns? If not, you should!

Customers (people who buy) and leads (visitors who leave their information but don't buy on their first visit) can and should be actively marketed to. These are the best kind of "Opt-In Email," much better than cold email lists you pay for. Communicate with them regularly with compelling emails. Always include special offerings just for them, and always have a "call to action." People don't respond to a simple "check us out" message.

Chapter Five: How To *Know* Your Marketing Is Working!

Know Thyself!

The way most businesses figure something works or not is if they get "a lot" of people as a result. On the surface, this seems logical, and it is. However, the devil's in the details. What is a "lot" of response, and how are they certain there is a cause and effect between their ad and their sales? The answer is to track your marketing results.

To track results requires proper coding of ads. In the next chapter we'll cover coding your ads in detail. To use a simple example, perhaps you've seen print ads that have you respond to "Dept. J-27" or tell you to ask for "Extension 2104." In both examples, the advertiser is using a code to keep track of responses from a specific ad or media source.

Knowing What to track

As you test your marketing pieces (your ads, your articles, your website, etc.), you will tweak and massage your message. Track every item you alter from one version to another. For example,

Your headline – Changing a single word can alter your response rates!

Your copy – How do changes in text affect your results?

Your graphics – Does changing color or images change the effect of your display ads?

Your offer – What price works best? What combination of bonuses? Free shipping?

Your product – Which highlighted product gets the greatest response?

Your markets – Try successful ads in different markets, and open up new opportunities!

Your source – Which publishers get the highest results for the same ad? This applies whether you are doing print ads, television, radio, direct mail, direct email, search engine optimization or pay per click advertising. For the purpose of this Report, we're only focused on online media - websites, web portals, search engines, directories and specifically, pay-per-click advertising – but this applies to ALL of your marketing efforts.

Test one thing at a time!

A common mistake is to test too many variables at one time. When colors change, headlines change, the offer and other items change, how do you know **which change worked** unless you take the time to test them individually? You can't! Resist the urge to make comprehensive changes to your ads. Test different aspects one at a time and you'll gain the advantage of understanding how little things can mean a lot!

So, what's a "good" test?

The short answer is that a "good" test brings positive results. Depending on your campaign and your focus, "good" means different things. Like we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, for most businesses, simply getting "a lot" of response is "good," but what is the **break-even** point of the program? Also, are they measuring **raw leads, pre-qualified leads, direct sales, follow-up sales** or what?

Here's some of the results you'll want to measure:

Clickthrus - How many come to your site?

Conversions (sales) - How many buy?

ROI (Return On Investment) - How much your marketing makes divided by how much it costs.

Breakeven - The minimum you have to make to have a self-sustaining ad program.

Sign up conversions - How many names can you capture (for secondary marketing efforts)?

Page views and site penetration - It's important to know your website is getting and holding their interest and attention. Otherwise, for the people who come, there's no "there" there!

In Chapter Six we'll look at these in more detail. The important thing here is to determine the metrics that matter the most to you. You see, success for you may be different than success to another advertiser.

But no matter how you measure your success, you can ALWAYS IMPROVE!

Let's consider a couple of *lead-generating* campaigns. These are campaigns designed to get people interested enough in your ad to visit your site and leave their name. These are campaigns where the sale takes place after the customer's initial visit.

Let's say one of our two campaigns generates 2,000 leads. We'll call that "A." The other one, "B," pulls 1,000 leads. Which is the more successful? The one that gave "a lot" of leads, or the one that gave the *highest quality leads*?

Remember, these leads still have to be "worked" or converted to a sale. You may have an autoresponse email or series of emails to convert them. Right now they've simply "raised their hand" and said they were interested. So, some more time and possibly more money has to be invested to convert them.

What if the conversion of the "A" leads led to 150 sales, but 90 "B" leads converted? The first still led to more sales for the same money, but the second led to greater sales for the numbers of leads... so the second campaign was more efficient at producing sales (90 sales per 1000 leads vs. 75 per 1000 for "A").

Ultimately, it all depends on how you view the results. One approach is "the more the merrier!" (2000 vs. 1000 leads, 150 vs. only 90 sales), while the other is "give me the 'hottest' leads for my money, so I don't waste time with people who are wishy-washy!" For this individual, 90 sales out of 1000 leads is a higher "hit" ratio ($90/1000 = .09$ or 9%) than 150 out of 2000 ($150/2000 = .075$ or 7.5%), so less work is done processing the leads.

If the two campaigns cost exactly the same to run, then "A's" higher response number resulted in more sales, but the increased conversion costs (more leads had to be worked to generate each sales) resulted in *lower net profits*. "B" resulted in a higher percentage of sales (for leads worked), and with its lower conversion costs potentially increased the bottom line net profits.

Let's look deeper into the dollar costs of the conversions. What if our sale isn't a fixed price and product, but can be different items and prices, depending on the customer's desire and the effectiveness of our site copy? If the 90 "A" leads, being "hotter" generated an average of \$100 per sale, and the 150 generated an average \$60 per sale, then they both generated the same overall revenue (\$9000). The 90 sales took almost half as much work to make the same amount of money!

You can see how individual preferences and perceptions can affect the concept of “good.” Do you have a backend strategy in place to work leads? Do you want your prospects to buy now? Or is it more important to you to collect their information? Is your fulfillment a simple download or does it require staff to pack and ship? Considerations such as this could make the higher number of leads desirable, because your long-term conversions may be more important to your overall business plan.

There are, of course, other factors that need to be considered - these are only a few. In the next chapter we cover the metrics that will help guide you in these areas, and introduce you to software options that do all the hard work for you.

How will YOU determine what's “successful” - what's working for you and what isn't? The most important question is, “What Do You Want?!”

Deciding the answer to this question will revolutionize your own marketing, advertising, and promotional efforts. The ultimate determination of success for any campaign is YOU. Once you know the answer to this question, start measuring every online ad campaign and tracking the results... and you WILL KNOW when your campaigns are working.

Measure Your Results... *Marketing is testing!*

Develop the attitude that you must always be testing, refining, and retesting continuously to try to better your *control piece*. Your control piece is your best-pulling ad or campaign, the one that generates the best response *up till now*. If you are always testing other “challenger” campaigns, while still running your control, you will eventually find an ad that outpulls your control. The piece that beats your control then becomes your new control, your new “best” ad. Then, you begin trying to better your “best” all over again.

Never agree to long-term PPC advertising buys where there's no way to change the ad! Try to stay nimble, always able to change ads quickly.

Direct Response Lets You Know!

Direct response marketing is the only approach that allows you to use hard numbers to plan, develop, carry out and measure the results of your marketing programs. With direct response, you tailor the campaigns to allow you to track responses accurately and you structure your ads and website copy to generate a direct response on the part of the prospect.

Other marketing approaches, primarily used by major corporations, emphasize things like brand awareness, customer identity (“feel-good” ads), corporate image (think “bank” or “stockbroker”), or other factors. The actual effectiveness of these institutional ads is generally not measurable. Larger corporations are often more interested in measuring things like “total market share,” so, if the research and focus group consultants indicate their share has moved up a half a point a month after a new campaign begins, they determine the campaign was a success. Likewise, if market share drops, the campaign is killed and the ad agency fired.

There is very little direct response advertising in corporate America. Consequently, there are billions spent on worthless campaigns that create the “image” the CEO or the board of directors likes, and along the way, sales take place, simply because of the volume of messages, habit patterns, impulse shopping and other factors.

While there is a place for image advertising, for small business owners to invest more than a miniscule amount of their budget in this type of marketing is crazy. Yet, open any phone book or newspaper, and that's what you see: "We're the best! We're Number One! Since 1967!" Ads that say "Me, me, me!" to customers looking for ads talking the them in "You, you, you" language. Ads that are not compelling, say nothing, ask no response, and at the best tout some "sale" to try to attract customers. Online advertising is no different. Click most PPC ads and you will find a disjointed website that does little or nothing to support the ad's pitch at all. In fact, on many sites you'll be hard-pressed to find the item that interested you in the first place.

You don't have the time, money, and hopefully no inclination to waste your money this way. You need answers. You need direct response. You need numbers.

Ultimately, the objective is to find your marketing "sweet spot," where your pricing, offer, ad, placement, site copy and all the rest converge to generate the most qualified leads for the least cost. This is one of the "holy grails" of marketing. This happy medium can only be found through ongoing testing and analysis, and retesting. Another "holy grail" to set your sights on is to so refine your marketing in this way, that your upfront revenues cover ALL of your lead generating, so you can generate new leads, new prospects and new customers in an unlimited, ongoing way at NO cost to you!

Chapter Six: How To Make Your Campaigns Accountable By Tracking Your Efforts

As the last chapter explained, the key to an ongoing successful marketing strategy is to track your results, your responses, all of them. But how? The myriad of detail required may at first seem daunting, then difficult, later impossible! Soon, however, you will view it as absolutely essential. In this chapter we'll expand on the specific ways to track your campaigns, to make them accountable and profitable!

Having a program in place to monitor your results will save you hundreds of hours of your time and efforts. A special type of software "tracking" program (such as **AdWatcher™**) follows every detail of online campaigns, allowing you to make real-time, on-the-fly changes and alterations to your ads, before you spend a lot of money on losers. In the past, vast marketing departments were needed to perform these tasks, but today many of the steps have been automated. Without having the assistance of today's advanced tracking software, getting the necessary real-time data to run effective advertising campaigns would be a practical impossibility for most businesses.

It takes a plan

Using the techniques described in this Report, create a website filled with interesting, compelling copy. Lead them through your site along the path you want them to go. Always give them clear and concise instructions on their "next steps." Of course, on your ad the only response is to click the link. This is obvious, and an entrenched part of online culture. It usually isn't even necessary to sacrifice strong sales copy in your ad to instruct them to "click here." Once they get to your site, it's a different story: your offer will lead them to take further action (to buy or register).

Carefully decide what your call to action will be. Your visitors must be told exactly what to do and if there are any other requirements to act, such as filling out a form or having their credit card handy.

Tracking Ads

To measure results, you have to track each ad with a code that identifies the ad, the offer, and where it is placed. A tracking code should be "transparent," meaning the prospect isn't aware that their response is being measured.

In the past these "source codes" took many different, often complex forms. Sometimes a name would be used (ask for "Sally") or a department code ("Dept 101" or "Awards Manager") or perhaps a telephone extension ("Extension 212"). Whenever "Sally" calls came in (or whichever code was used), they would be immediately logged in and handled in a specific matter. Later, somebody had to enter the data into a spreadsheet, so the numbers could be crunched and the results tallied. It was a lot of manual work, but the final report would clearly show the best response ad: If "Sally" outperformed John, Mary, or Judy, the "Sally" piece would become the new control, and the cycle would begin again with a new challenger piece to test against "Sally."

I have performed simultaneous mailings of a dozen or more different letters (as well as TV and radio spots), each with the same offer (testing different lists or stations) or with a slightly different offer or headline or some other variable. My preferred coding was a simple sequential alphanumeric code for each: 115L3A,

115L3B, 115L3C, and so on. 115 was my date (November 5th), L3 for lot #3 - an internal designation of the product being sold - and A,B,C,D, etc. for the version of the sales letter used. Although this sounds complex, we often had dozens of similar campaigns being tracked, manually, at the same time!

It takes a department to track an ad!

That worked great for companies with the resources to hire a marketing manager, a department full of marketing people, data entry clerks, and support personnel. If a company's resources were somewhat less than this, their marketing could only get limited attention. The result was sort of like the "rich get richer and the poor get poorer" truism - the companies with resources continued to grow in leaps and bounds, while the companies without muddled along.

Having a tracking program to monitor your advertising is like having an entire marketing department at your beck and call.

It seamlessly assigns a unique URL code into each ad. When an interested prospect clicks your ad, the site she came through as well as all of her activity on your site is silently monitored and tracked. Whether she signs up for a Free item (such as a Newsletter or Demo), or if she decides to make a purchase, every action of her visit should be noted and the effect on your ROI automatically calculated. Make sure the program you choose is full-featured, as many programs have features designed by programmers who are not necessarily marketers, and so they skip important parts of the tracking process. We review the major programs in Chapter Eight.

A serious tracking program, while inexpensive, can make measuring your campaigns unbelievably simple and easy. This feature is especially important when comparing the PPC search engine invoice "clickthru" counts against your on website traffic counts. Knowing where your traffic came from is the most basic metric for any campaign. You can use this and other features to tailor and place future ads.

"How did you hear about our offer?"

Knowing where your customers come from is especially useful when you are planning where to spend your advertising dollars. Many sites try to obtain this vital customer information on the cheap, by simply including drop-down boxes or fields asking the visitor/customer "survey questions," such as how they learned about your site or offer. This information is fully worth its price (nothing!), as a significant percentage of the answers will be wildly inaccurate. Customers will often say they saw your ad on whatever website comes to mind first. If you use a pull-down menu of choices, inevitably the first choice will be the clear "leader." The others will have reduced numbers, but even these are often just "drop and click" and don't reflect reality. Basing your online campaigns on this information is pointless. To change your campaign "results" requires simply changing the order of choices for your visitors!

This is true regardless of the media used. I did a radio campaign on seven (7) central Florida stations a few years back. The telemarketers were directed to ask which station the callers heard the ad on. I had 21 radio stations given as sources and 11 television stations. Not surprisingly, every radio station I actually used was given as a source by at least one prospect, but then it got crazy! I had radio and TV stations given which were two and three states away! I even had several newspapers and magazines given as sources! How valuable do you think my test results were? This type of market research is generally referred to as "man on the street"

data by statisticians. You may remember similar reports during the last election, when “exit polls” predicted an entirely different outcome than the actual votes cast!

Obviously, customer responses can vary greatly in their reliability. Making the response as transparent as possible (so the customer isn’t even aware they are giving the information), and accurately tracking their actual actions is much more effective.

What about fraud?

If you’re being charged by the clickthru, an easy way to run up the bill by an unscrupulous site owner or worse, a competitor, would be to simply click on your ad repeatedly. PPC campaigns have long suffered from the fear of fraudulent clickthrus. There are programs designed to address this one problem head on by tracking how many responses come from each individual IP address. If more than, say 5, clicks come from the same address, you should receive an automatic message notifying you that fraud is suspected. Users report that their fraudulent clickthru rates have dropped dramatically because of this one feature. When fraud is suspected, you can supply the search engine with your data, and in many cases they will credit you the cost of the clicks in question. Make sure you are tracking fraud in your campaigns.

It’s only good if you use it

Unfortunately, many people never use the few sparse marketing numbers they may already have (like gross visitor counts, page views, etc.) to plan or analyze their existing advertising programs. Some just “never get around to it,” while others simply ignore the data completely (they know if an ad is “good” or not!). The end result is they drain their budget throwing good money after bad - either by continuing to run low producing ads and never seeing improved results or by dumping ads that are actually producing pretty well - simply because they choose to remain willingly ignorant. When it comes to the ***Science of Marketing***, these folks prove once again the old adage that ***"Figures don't lie, but liars figure."***

The vast majority of business owners would analyze and utilize this strategic information IF they only had it. For you, investing in a comprehensive tracking program to accurately track and report your results in a seamless, simple fashion, will allow you to alter future ads and run targeted tests to maximize your results, IF you remain ***Consistent and Persistent*** in your efforts.

Section III: Consistency & Persistency

Chapter Seven: 11 Success Metrics To Analyze Your Online Marketing Success

"Figures Don't Lie, But Liars Figure"

These are the equations professional marketers use to constantly analyze and improve successful marketing programs. If there are “secrets” of marketing, these are probably the ones most relevant. The majority of your competitors don't have a clue about how successful or unsuccessful their marketing efforts have been, because they have no way to cost effectively measure or analyze the metrics of their campaigns. You can use these formulas to guide you through the incredibly low-cost, high-performance world of Online Pay-Per-Click Marketing.

Bear in mind that PPC advertising is pay-as-you-go, unless you have a set ceiling on your clickthrus, like the 1,000 click campaign figure we're using. If you are on a “till forbid” PPC contract, where your ad runs until you pull it, then you will need to do ongoing real-time analysis using the clickthru rate x the current number of clickthrus in the place of total campaign cost.. Obviously, this approach can give false high or low results, depending on when you pull your reports. For this reason, use running metrics like this for thumbnail reference only, not to determine if your campaign is successful or not.

For the purpose of simplicity, we are using a PPC campaign costing \$0.10 per clickthru for 1000 clicks (\$100 total campaign cost). Yes, it's a bargain price, but is it worthwhile even at a dime a click? You decide!

1) Response Rate = total number of clickthrus / number of actual leads.

Ex: 1000 clickthrus / 25 leads = 2.5%

2) Raw cost per actual lead (CPL) = Cost for campaign / number of responses

(Note that the raw cost per lead is different than the cost per clickthru. Here we are considering only visitors who leave contact email or other information – the actual leads you end up with).

Ex: (PPC \$0.10 per clickthru x 1,000 clickthrus) = \$100 Campaign cost / 25 responses = \$4.00 CPL

In my experience, less than one in ten businesses knows their cost per lead!

3) Raw Cost per Sale or Cost per Conversion (CPC) = Cost for campaign / number of buyers

Ex: (PPC \$0.10 per clickthru x 1,000 clickthrus) = \$100 Campaign cost / 10 sales = \$10.00 CPC

One of the most important metrics for any campaign. Do you know your actual cost for each sale you make?

If you want to measure your campaign as you go, say, at 770 responses, convert the PPC cost into campaign costs using the formula shown at the beginning: \$0.10 PPC x 770 (responses at a given point) = \$77. Then

divide by the number of sales at that point for a running cost per sale. (Note this figure should only be used as a rule of thumb, not as an accurate measurement. It is useful to calculate if your PPC contract requires you to make a renewal decision mid-campaign)

If there are additional fulfillment costs, such as packing and shipping, use this formula:

3) Loaded cost per conversion (Loaded CPC) = (Cost for campaign / number of responses) + cost of fulfillment (+ telemarketing or other commissions if applicable)

Ex: (\$10.00 CPC) + \$6.00 per lead mail & handling = \$16.00 per lead

For a more accurate picture, this formula factors in the other costs associated with a sale. Because these other variables can also be adjusted – and may even decrease as a campaign progresses – the success or failure of a campaign should not be solely figured based on the loaded CPL.

If the primary objective is a direct sale, then the *cost per sale* becomes a factor.

4) Conversion rate, or Closing ratio = the number of the number of sales / total responses

Ex: 10 sales / 1000 clickthru responses = 1% conversion rate.

How good are we at converting visitors to customers? In other words, how many clicked and how many hit the home page and exited? In this example, we are converting one in ten. This tells us we need to work on our site. We're getting visitors, so the ad is working. When they hit our site we're not converting.

Often the initial sales conversion rate may not be considered the most important factor. The leads may be being generated for backend sales. You should require your tracking program to track the site visitors who purchase or register AND those who simply come and leave, then return. You may find your site works well at converting these visitors after the second or third visit. Knowing what you want to achieve in advance determines which figures matter when analyzing a campaign.

Determining a breakeven point requires a net profit sales figure.

For most marketers, this is the single most important metric. This is the amount you have to earn to *breakeven* on your PPC campaign. Having a campaign that breaks even means your marketing is self-sufficient - that enough sales are coming in from the ad to cover all costs, so you can continue to promote your site ad infinitum. With unlimited ability to run your online ads, you can develop powerful ongoing backend programs to generate significant revenue from your growing base of prospects and customers. For our example we'll assume we net \$10 per sale.

6) Number of orders needed to reach breakeven: = Cost of campaign / net profit per sale

Ex: (Using \$10 net profit): \$100 campaign cost / \$10 net per sale = 10 orders.

So out of the 25 leads we received, we have to close 10 sales, or 40 % to breakeven.

7) Percentage of actual leads that must be closed to breakeven = orders needed to breakeven / number of leads:

Ex: 10 sales / 25 leads = 40%.

This is another way of looking at the same information. If we need to close 10 of 25 leads, we must close 40% of our leads.

Obviously, the lower this percentage, the better our odds of success. If we only had to close 20%, we've cut our required breakeven percent by half. Ways to lower this figure include, a) improving our control ad (for more leads), b) reducing our online campaign costs, c) by increasing our sales closing ratio - our *conversion rate* - once we get the lead to our site, or d) by upselling these leads a higher net profit item.

8) Raw conversion ratio needed = number of orders needed / number of raw leads

Ex: 10 sales / 1000 leads = 1%

Similarly, we can factor the number of visitors we need to close, but our number will be much lower (which can lead to a false confidence). As we've seen, having to convert "only" 1% of the visitors (clickthrus) is really more involved than just getting one out of ten. We need to be looking at more than just the raw conversion ratio.

How many leads do you need to breakeven?

Ultimately, knowing your metrics allows you to begin projecting your sales and marketing into the future. If you get a good idea of your costs per lead (cpl), net profit, and conversion rate, then you can estimate the number of raw leads (clickthrus) you need to buy to earn a certain amount of revenue. Or, for any campaign, you can immediately figure how many raw leads you need to breakeven.

9) Clickthrus needed to breakeven: net profit per sale / PPC cost (per click or per campaign)

Ex 1: \$10 net profit / \$.10 per clickthru = 100 sales to breakeven

Ex 2: \$10 net profit / \$100 total campaign cost = 1000 sales to breakeven

Whether you are on a running contract or a fixed number of total clicks, you can use this to quickly figure what you need to sell to breakeven.

With this metric, you can begin looking critically at every ad and every search engine, every keyword buy and every position. You will be able to determine if the clicks you are getting are worth the price. And, even more importantly, you will be able to see the weak areas of your marketing and take steps to improve them, whether this means site changes, ad changes, offer changes, or search engine placement changes. You will be able to fine tune your online advertising to get the most bang for your buck.

10) ROI – Return On Investment = net income (sales x net per item = campaign net) / total campaign costs

Ex: Let's say for this example that you sold 12 items, each with \$10 net profit. \$120 / \$100 = 120% (or a 1.2 earning ratio; \$1.20 was made for every ad dollar spent)

11) **Cash Flow Analysis (gross)** = Total income (total sales x gross revenue per sale) / total campaign cost

Ex: Let's say for this example, that each item sells for \$40; $12 \times \$40 = \480 . $\$480 / 100$ total campaign cost = $\$4.80$ revenue per ad dollar spent

For many businesses, the money coming in vs. the money going out is the most important metric of all. Running your business on a cash basis doesn't take into account the bigger picture (what you actually make at the end of the day), but it means there is sufficient cash flow to continue running performing ads and testing new ones.

The bottom line? It is imperative that you focus on creating effective, compelling, measurable marketing campaigns for your business. Then, take what you've learned and be a source of help for your clients, as well! They desperately need your help to maximize their advertising and marketing dollars! And they will pay you handsomely for helping them out!

Chapter Eight: Selecting A Tracking Program That Does It All For You

Getting all the tracking and monitoring services in one program

Running an effective online advertising program requires a lot of grit. Many have a romantic image of someone sitting in a beach chair, gentle waves lapping underneath, laptop or PDA in hand. Umbrella shading them from the tropical sun, a waiter in shorts and a pith helmet, holding out a tray of Margueritas or Piña Coladas, as they lazily transfer their money from their online sales to their Swiss bank account.

The reality is much different. Successful online businesses are run like any other business, with careful attention to details such as expenditures, productivity, and revenues. To effectively run your business requires the right information at the right time, in a format that's clear and easy to utilize.

As an independent marketing company, Web3direct (www.web3direct.com) has reviewed and used major tracking and webmetrics programs, from the earliest days of Internet Marketing until now. Many have great features, some are practically useless. We've seen programs that are only available on the software company's website, others that allow you to run it from your own server. Some have simple interfaces, others require three Masters' degrees and eight years of programming experience to figure out!

Our Comparison Of Tracking Programs

We rated most of tracking services and program available on the market. We selected the top 5 and compared them side by side.

	AdWatcher™	AdMinder	ClickAlyzer	ClickTracks	WhosClickingWho
Cost	\$19.95/mo	\$29.95/mo	\$39.95/mo	\$49/mo	\$79/mo
Web Interface	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Live Support	Yes	No	No	No	No
Tracks clicks from ads, PPC Search Engines, archives, catalogs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multiple Site Monitoring	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tips for successful campaign built in	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
ROI Calculator	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cost to Conversion Stats	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Financial Reports	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Key Word Tracking	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Split tracking	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
e-mail notifications	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Fraud Monitoring	Yes	No	No	No	Yes

Conclusion

This Report provides you an overview on the use of compelling direct response marketing techniques. The “Three Keys” are true regardless of the medium you choose, however, in no other type of advertising can their validity be realized as quickly as with online marketing. As you begin testing and tracking the copy changes and design elements of your website and your online ads, you will see immediate changes in response from your prospects.

Bear in mind, responses can go down as well as up! As Thomas Edison said when asked how he handled thousands of “failures” when developing the first electric light, from his point of view he merely found a lot of ways it didn’t work! When your advertising results decrease (on a test campaign), recognize that the purpose of testing is to make your advertising more effective. Validate your results (with a second test), and proceed by ditching the loser and move on to your next ad variation. As I shared above, there is no other venue – not print, direct mail, television, radio, etc. – where you can adapt your advertising as quickly as on the Internet.

We at MordComm, Inc. (www.mordcomm.com) and web3direct.com hope this report has been informative and useful, and that it helps enhance your marketing efforts. When considering the awesome task of tracking and monitoring your advertising, also consider the incredible result these efforts will mean to your bottom line.

This Special Report series was written to provide solid information, to help you create profitable marketing campaigns. For more direct assistance, contact us:

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We’re here to help you with your online marketing and advertising needs!

About The Author

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Emerson Brantley has an extensive history of over 25 years of marketing and business funding expertise, and serves on the board of directors of several marketing and international funding companies in the US and UK. He was a key member of the senior management team that propelled one company through 1500% growth, TWO Inc. 500 listings, a successful merger, and a \$60,000,000 IPO.

For over 25 years, Emerson has specialized in creating cost-effective **direct marketing** to bring in more prospects, drive more traffic, and generate more dollars per customer. He has developed and directed highly-effective e-commerce programs with up to 21% click-thru rates and conversion rates as high as 41.55 - 67.8%; increased website traffic to 10,000 users per day; coordinated highly-profitable backend campaigns averaging as much as \$1952 per customer (with a \$49 entry point!); and produced *four* profitable national television infomercials.

Although he's been called a "pioneer of online marketing" (his first Internet classified ad was in 1993, a full year before the birth of the "World Wide Web"... it cost \$70 and netted \$1250 profit), Emerson is highly experienced in the effective and economical use of all types of media. He has developed successful marketing strategies for companies as diverse as *Fortune 100* industrial giant Fruehauf Corporation; transportation leader Emery Worldwide (receiving their National *Special Recognition Award*); seminar and training innovator SDI Wealth Institute, International Media Holdings, and America's oldest non-profit, American Forests.

He has been involved in **business funding** since the mid-nineties. He served as part of the team that created the business plan and met with lenders, taking a company public. In the process, he gained over 300 funding contacts. Through his work with WorldwideAngels, Emerson expanded his experience and lender contacts, analyzing hundreds of business plans and matching companies with funding resources. He continues to personally work with businesses to help them find the funding they need.

Emerson has written or co-authored several business books: "The Maxims of Marketing," "Internet Profits Now;" "How It Gets Done," "21 Secrets of Real Estate Millionaires;" as well as many courses, manuals, sales pieces, and guest feature articles.

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree, magna cum laude, from Florida State University, and holds international professional listings in Who's Who of Business Leaders Worldwide and Certified Marketing Executives. He has served on many civic, business and non-profit boards, and is Past President of Sales & Marketing Executives.